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The Spiritual Conquest of Marriage: How the Holy Office and Council of Trent Attempted to Reform the Laity of New Spain

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Beobachtungen zu Inaugenscheinnahmen und
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(1495–1806)

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Abstract

The Council of Trent's reform of marriage attempted to give the Church greater oversight over marriage and rein in popular misconceptions about the sacrament. In colonial Mexico, this shift in the definition of marriage coincided with the arrival of the Holy Office of the Inquisition. This article examines how the conjuncture of these two events impacted laity in New Spain, especially non-Spaniards of mixed ancestry such as *mestizos* and *mulatos*. The keen interest shown by the Inquisition in reforming the morals of the laity coupled with the changes in the definition of marriage resulted in the prosecution of many non-Spaniards for crimes against the sacrament of marriage. Through an analysis of various cases against non-Spaniards, this article argues that the late sixteenth century reform of marriage represented a unique spiritual conquest. Unlike the spiritual conquest of indigenous subjects for whom Christianity represented a completely new religious system, the spiritual conquest waged by the Holy Office sought to correct long-standing misconceptions and wide-spread ignorance held by members of Hispanic society.

Keywords: Marriage, race, Council of Trent, Mexico, laity



Robert C. Schwaller

The Spiritual Conquest of Marriage: How the Holy Office and Council of Trent Attempted to Reform the Laity of New Spain

One night in 1563, Isabel de Azevedo, a *mestiza*, was walking in the company of Hernando de Loaysa, a Spaniard, and several other women through the streets of Mexico City.¹ As they neared the convent of the Order of the Immaculate Conception, Esteban de Enero, a Spaniard, joined their party, and challenged Hernando saying, »Knave, I told you not to come near this street. I am suspicious of you!« Hernando replied that he had no quarrel with Esteban. Quickly, Esteban's focus switched to Isabel. Addressing the group, Esteban announced that he wanted to marry Isabel. As members of the party held the couple's hands together, Esteban asked, »Do you want to marry me and be my wife,« to which she responded, »Yes.« Esteban continued, »If you wish I'll be your husband.« Isabel consented and said, »I am your wife.« With that the couple took leave of the rest of the party and returned to the home of Isabel. Esteban and Isabel would live with his mother for six months before an altercation led to their separation. Their relationship had been a rocky one that began when she was just a girl. In the years that followed they were arrested for being *amancebados* (sexually involved outside of marriage) on multiple occasions.

This on-again-off-again romance would likely not have been preserved for posterity had Esteban not chosen to marry another woman, Maria de Arguea, around 1569. When word spread of a second marriage, Esteban de Enero found himself before the Holy Office of the Inquisition under suspicion of bigamy. Esteban's crime was not unique; multiple marriages were surprisingly common due to the mobility of individuals within early colonial Mexico and the Spanish Empire.² Yet, the timing of his marriages added several layers of legal and historical complexity. Between his first and second marriages, the Council of Trent

had subtly but profoundly altered canon law regulating marriage. Of particular interest to the council was prohibiting exactly the type of marriage that had occurred between Esteban and Isabel – that is clandestine marriage. Moreover, when his marriages occurred the Holy Office of the Inquisition had not been established in Mexico. Between 1535 and 1571, inquisitorial power rested with the bishop who was empowered to act as ecclesiastical judge ordinary in all matters pertaining to heresy or heterodoxy.³ Although the bishops of Mexico were quite active during the 1560s, the scale of their investigations was still small in comparison with what would come after the extension of the Inquisition to Mexico in 1571.⁴ When Esteban was denounced in 1574, he found himself in a predicament shaped as much by historical circumstances as by his own choices. Not only had the standards of marriage changed almost overnight, the enforcement of those standards and of heresy had fallen to a new institution striving to reform the laity.

Using the case of Esteban de Enero and other inquisitorial cases from the late sixteenth century, this essay argues that the changes brought by Tridentine marriage reform and the establishment of the Holy Office in New Spain represented a new front in the ongoing spiritual conquest of Latin America. This phrase, coined by Robert Ricard, has traditionally been used to describe the process of evangelising native peoples by mendicant missionaries.⁵ Although most work on spiritual conquest has focused on the conversion of indigenous peoples, late sixteenth century reforms within the Catholic Church and the establishment of the Holy Office effectively brought heightened ecclesiastical vigilance on members of Hispanic society. This study suggests that these changes were particularly pernicious to non-Spanish individuals who

1 Archivo General de la Nación (México; AGN in the following), Inquisición, vol. 102, exp. 7.

2 BOYER (1995).

3 GREENLEAF (1969) 74.

4 GREENLEAF (1969) 100.

5 RICARD (1966).

by virtue of their socio-racial status were seen as common and base. As subaltern subjects, they were both less likely to receive adequate religious instruction and more likely to be considered deviant and dangerous members of society. In this regard, this study highlights the ways in which colonial racial prejudice, Tridentine marriage reforms, and increased enforcement of orthodoxy worked to extend the spiritual conquest of the Americas into Hispanic society and individuals of mixed ancestry.

Marriage and Its Changes in Sixteenth Century Spanish America

Prior to the Council of Trent, the essence of the sacrament of marriage was understood to be the exchange of vows through a mutual expression of consent by both parties. A series of pontifical decrees by Pope Alexander III (r. 1159–1181) established the »free consent doctrine«, which emphasised that the only consent necessary for sacramental marriage was that of the bride and groom.⁶ Theologians further elaborated the issue of free consent in the centuries that followed. Writers including Thomas Aquinas and Petrus de Palude viewed sacrament of marriage as an act entered into by a man and a woman through mutual consent before God; clerical participation was not necessary for the sacrament itself.⁷

Importantly, the terminology of marriage in Castilian mirrored this theological construction. In discussing marriage three verbs were of particular importance: *casar*, *desposar*, and *velar*. Of the three, the verb *casar* is closest to the English sense of »to marry«. *Casar* was the verb used in marital vows and in popular parlance about marriage. The verb *desposar* could refer to a betrothal or a promise of future marriage. If the couple exchanged *palabras de presente* (literary, »words of the present«) the act of being *desposado* fulfilled the theological requirement of mutual consent. A *desposorio* could also occur using *palabras de futuro* (»words of the future«), unlike *palabras de presente* this form was dissoluble provided the couple did not engage in sexual relations thereby consummating

the union.⁸ The verb *velar* referred to the subsequent blessing of a marriage by a priest.⁹ In the case of Esteban and Isabel, their exchange on the bridge qualified as a *desposorio por palabras de presente*. When Esteban and Isabel subsequently had sex they fulfilled the secondary requirement of physical union.

Esteban's case provides a clear example of the problem faced by the Church. Although Church practice accepted such marriages as valid unions so long as no other canonical impediments existed, the ecclesiastical authorities had no means to document or adjudicate such marriages if they occurred outside the oversight of parish priests.¹⁰ The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) had attempted to further prohibit clandestine marriage by requiring couples announce their intent to marry (the banns of marriage).¹¹ Unfortunately, the council did not alter the canonical definition of marriage. Between the Fourth Lateran Council and the Council of Trent, clandestine marriage remained a valid, albeit illicit, form of the sacrament.

In their efforts to clarify and reform Church practice the Council of Trent placed marriage under particular scrutiny. Two aspects of marriage required attention. First, the council worked to define marriage as one of seven sacraments in opposition to Protestant claims that only Baptism and Eucharist be counted as sacraments. Secondly, and most importantly for this discussion, the participants at Trent sought to remedy the problem that under canon law marriage did not require clerical oversight to be sacramentally valid. The most important change made by the Council of Trent was the Tametsi Decree of 1563.¹² This decree made all clandestine marriages null and void by adding clandestinity to the list of marital impediments. Moreover, the decree further stipulated that unless the couple exchanged vows in the presence of a priest and before witnesses the marriage was null and void.¹³ The fact that the decree only applied to marriages contracted after its publication created new problems. By introducing a new standard for marriage, while upholding those contracted under the old formulation, the Tametsi decree ushered in a period in which ecclesiastical

6 D'AVRAY (2005) 126–127.

7 AQUINAS (1975) 295–296; LEHMKUHL (1910) 711.

8 DONAHUE (2007) 16; D'AVRAY (2005) 60, 173–174.

9 D'AVRAY (2005) 144–148.

10 DONAHUE (2007) 18–32.

11 D'AVRAY (2005) 105.

12 VAN OMMEREN (2003).

13 O'NEILL (1908) 1.

authorities would need to adjudicate marriages contracted under two very different standards.

In Mexico, as elsewhere, most pastoral oversight of the laity occurred at the parish or diocesan level. Parish priests, bishops, and archbishops represented the primary actors tasked with evangelisation, catechisation, and enforcement of religious doctrine. Importantly, most individuals who fell into spiritual sin were dealt with pastorally through the sacrament of penance (confession) by their parish priest. Individuals suspected of more serious crimes could be investigated, tried, and penanced by the diocesan ordinary through ecclesiastical tribunals organised within diocese or archdiocese.¹⁴ Nevertheless, after 1571, when individuals were suspected of heresy the pastoral oversight of the laity necessarily involved the Holy Office of the Inquisition.

Soon after its foundation in Mexico the Holy Office became concerned with the sacrament of marriage and any heretical crimes perpetrated against it. Moreover, the Council of Trent's reformist drive coupled with fears of Protestantism created a climate of rapid religious change just as the Holy Office established itself in Mexico.¹⁵ After an initial wave of trials against English privateers and French corsairs, much of the late sixteenth century activity of the tribunal emphasised reforming the faith and morals of the laity. Although such enforcement included crimes like blasphemy or sorcery (*hechicería*) many cases dealt with heretical crimes against matrimony. These included bigamy cases like that of Esteban de Enero, but could also include blasphemies or superstitions about sex and marriage. In the first two decades of the tribunal's existence, bigamy represented the largest subset of cases, accounting for roughly twenty-nine percent of cases. The crimes of heresy, blasphemy, and propositions (all of which could deal with sexual morality) together

accounted for another thirty-seven percent of trials.¹⁶

The emphasis on reforming the morals of the colony can be seen as a shift in the ongoing spiritual conquest of New Spain. Radical changes in the definition of orthodoxy coupled with the intense drive to reform the spiritual and moral life of the laity suggest that beginning in the 1560s and 1570s and continuing into the 1580s and 1590s the Catholic Church had effectively expanded spiritual conquest to include members of Hispanic society. Importantly, this new spiritual conquest and its enforcement by the Inquisition specifically excluded indigenous people. Unlike the ecclesiastical judges ordinary, the formal Holy Office of the Inquisition did not have jurisdiction over indigenous people.¹⁷ Consequently, this new front was directed not at indigenous neophytes but at members of Hispanic society, including those of mixed race and Africans, who were presumed to be familiar with Church doctrine and Christian morality.¹⁸

Confusion About Marriage

Marriage in colonial New Spain and Spanish America has been the subject of significant historiographical study. Many scholars have approached marriage as a means by which to gauge socio-racial dynamics and the progression of *mestizaje* during the colonial period.¹⁹ Others have explored the social importance of marriage.²⁰ Still others have studied marriage through the lens of gender and its role in shaping the lives of women, men, and families.²¹ This essay adds to this rich literature by drawing attention to the differential way that marriage was understood by members of late sixteenth century Mexican society. Marriage was certainly a ubiquitous institution within colonial

14 TRASLOSHEROS (2002) 490–491.

15 GREENLEAF (1969) 160.

16 NESVIG (2009) 138–139, see Tables 6.1 and 6.2.

17 GREENLEAF (1969) 173–174. Soon after the establishment of the Inquisition, Mexican prelates formed a new diocesan institution, the *provisorato de indios*, to provide more direct pastoral oversight of religious orthodoxy among indigenous people. TRASLOSHEROS (2002) 491–492.

18 There exists a rich scholarly literature examining efforts to catechize and indoctrinate indigenous subjects in Mexico. Notable works on the catechization of indigenous subjects include: BURKHART (1989); CHRISTENSEN (2013); EDGERTON (2001); GRUZINSKI (1989); PARDO (2006).

19 COPE (1994) 78–84; MCCAA (1984) 477–501; RESTALL (2009) 257–265; SCHWALLER (2016) chap. 4 and 5.

20 BOYER (1995) 61–164; BOYER (1992); GONZALBO AIZPURU (2007); SEED (1988).

21 FIGUERAS VALLÉS (2003); KUZNESOF (1995); SOCOLOW (2000) 60–77.

life, but it could be understood and misunderstood in a variety of ways.

At the centre of this late sixteenth century dilemma was the question – what constituted a marriage? In the case of Esteban de Enero, there existed quite a range of opinions as to whether the couple's exchange on the bridge constituted a marriage. For example, in the initial denunciation, Melchor de los Reyes astutely noted that the encounter happened before the publication of the Council of Trent. Francisco Hernandez similarly testified that the marriage had occurred prior to the publication of Trent and went on to note that everyone had recalled the couple calling each other man and wife. On the other hand, Isabel did not seem so certain of the implications of her actions.

Much of her testimony conveys reticence and fear. Isabel recalled that after being arrested for being *amancebado* Esteban had proposed marriage to which she replied *enhorabuena* (lit. »congratulations«). The somewhat vague affirmative implied by *enhorabuena* was not considered by sufficient evidence for *palabras de presente*.²² She detailed two other exchanges, the first before an altar in the home of some *indios*, and the second on the bridge before witnesses. Although Isabel was fearful of Esteban's wrath, she did not know how to clearly describe her exchange of vows with Esteban. Only after heavy prodding by the tribunal did she describe a valid, but illicit, clandestine marriage.

Other witnesses were more certain of what had transpired. Hernando de Loaysa noted that Esteban told the *provisor* of the marriage so that »he would absolve the witnesses for having been present«. Hernando de Loaysa and Esteban appear to have understood the marriage to have been sacramentally valid but sinful in its clandestinity. For his part, Esteban understood that an exchange of vows followed by consummation did constitute a marriage prior to Trent. Yet, in his testimony he consistently sought to undercut this formulation. Initially, Esteban denied all knowledge of any wrongdoing. Later, he admitted to being *amancebado* with Isabel, demeaning her as *mestiza* »woman of the world« (prostitute). He undercut the significance of his proposals by noting that she had said »no« many times before the one time that she said »yes«.

Esteban tried to undercut the exchange of vows in two ways. First, he emphasised Isabel's vacillation on the issue of marriage. He claimed that she was often upset or angry when he had asked her to marry. His second strategy was to imply that they did not consider each other husband and wife nor did the community or authorities. When asked if they called each other man and wife and acted like a married couple, Esteban denied that they had used those labels and rejected the claim that they had lived as a married couple.

The adjudication of his second marriage was made much easier because it had been contracted after the publication of Tridentine reforms. Banns had been announced for the union between Esteban and Maria de Arguea and the witnesses to their *desposorio* confirmed that it had occurred at the cathedral church of Mexico City. Although this marriage followed the proper Tridentine form, the new reforms did not achieve their ends. Despite having announced the banns of marriage, no witnesses came forward with information concerning Esteban and Isabel's relationship or their earlier clandestine marriage. This may be attributed to the fact that the marriage had occurred in the cathedral parish, Asunción Sagrario, and not the parish in which Esteban and Isabel resided, San Sebastian. Consequently, many of the individuals who had known Esteban and Isabel likely did not hear the banns. The inability of the banns to elicit testimony about Esteban and Isabel represents a flaw in the system, one that had dire effects for Esteban. In the end, the tribunal sentenced Esteban de Enero to two hundred lashes and a four-year exile from the archdiocese of Mexico. This case illustrates many of the problems caused by the change in matrimonial standards. Although several of the witnesses – all Spaniards – understood the importance of the Council of Trent's new formulation, this knowledge was not uniform. Both Isabel, a *mestiza*, and Esteban, a non-elite *español*, seemed unsure of the specifics of the new standards.

Esteban and Isabel were not alone in their confusion. Many Inquisitorial cases of bigamy contain evidence of confusion among the laity concerning marital procedure, a problem exacerbated by individual mobility and the ineffectiveness of banns in identifying previous marriages. An excellent example of this phenomenon can be seen

22 DONAHUE (2007) 17.

in the 1572, case against Manuel Diaz, a sixty-year-old, Portuguese-born, *mulato* muleteer.²³ Manuel was denounced by Diego Pérez who charged that Manuel had been married twice in Mexico while his first wife remained alive in Portugal. Manuel had travelled widely throughout his life. In Alvor, he was raised as a »man of the sea«. At the age of seventeen he married a young woman named Dominga Rodríguez. Eventually, Manuel left home and travelled to the Levant, spending time in Naples. Without returning to his wife and child, he set sail from Alvor sometime around 1540 and made his way to New Spain. He settled near Xalapa on the gulf coast. After several years, men arriving from Portugal told him that his wife had died. Time passed and in the mid-1560s he married a *mestiza* named Juana Diaz.

The details of his second wedding are sparse, but his testimony suggests that it may have been clandestine. The marriage took place at an inn located on road between Xalapa and Mexico City. He did not mention any clerical presence. Unlike the case of Esteban, Manuel and Juana did not seem to be worried about the clandestine nature of their marriage. The marriage produced three children only one of which survived. Several months after Juana's death, Manuel married a third time, to an *india* named Isabel Diaz. This third marriage likely occurred after the publication of the Tametsi decree.

The key issue in this case was whether or not Dominga Rodríguez was alive or dead. Manuel admitted that there had been different opinions about her death. Travelers from Portugal disagreed over her death. He claimed to have written letters to Dominga, but never received any in return. At one point, the inquisitors directly asked him if he thought it was okay to marry a second time while his first wife still lived; he responded haughtily, »No, because I am not a Moor«. Nonetheless, he did not have a good defence for his actions. By the time of his trial there was no doubt that his first wife was alive. Although his second marriage was clandestine, he admitted to the union. Similarly, his third marriage was not in doubt. Consequently, Manuel was sentenced to two hundred lashes and perpetual exile from the Indies.

Manuel's case illustrates how individual mobility and changing standards could facilitate breaches in marital procedure. The Church required that individuals wishing to remarry following the death of a spouse declare their status as widows/widowers. In most cases defendants lied or claimed never to have been asked about their status. Manuel should have known that the Church discouraged clandestine marriages. Yet, because clandestine marriage was not uncommon and could be absolved after the fact, he may not have felt the need to approach a priest. In avoiding clerical oversight, Manuel fell into a loophole of canon law. It is not surprising that the banns at his last marriage did not bring to light his first marriage given the great distance between Alvor and Xalapa. Although it is understandable that a simple *mulato* sailor-turned-muleteer might not have fully understood the ramifications of canon law and its changing norms, Manuel's ignorance of proper procedure led him into sin and before the Inquisition.

In addition to bigamy, trials of individuals promoting heretical beliefs based in ignorance or popular myth were also common during this turbulent period. An oft repeated – and prosecuted – claim was that sex out of wedlock was not a sin. For example, in 1571, Gaspar Pérez, a *mestizo* shoemaker, was denounced by Pedro Verastigui for claiming that having sex with a woman was not a sin.²⁴ Catalina Martín, a free black woman, recounted that Gaspar said that having sex with a prostitute was not a sin. Similarly, in 1572, a *mestizo* gilder named Baltasar Audelo self-denounced statements he had made while in a conversation with several fellow tradesmen.²⁵ The group had been discussing a Spaniard who had brought an *india* into his home in order to have sex with her. When asked if it was a worse sin to be *amancebado* or to just have sex once, Baltasar responded that the former was a mortal sin while the later was a venial sin.

An extreme case of such ignorance can be seen in the 1579 case against Francisca Baptista, a *mestiza*.²⁶ Like Baltasar, she self-denounced her crime. According to her confession and the statements of other witnesses, Francisca and several others were chatting in the house of Isabel Pérez. Francisca

23 AGN, Inq., vol. 94, exp. 2, fs. 68–112.

24 AGN, Inq., vol. 70, exp. 6, fs. 91–119.

25 AGN, Inq., vol. 70, exp. 7, fs. 120–139.

26 AGN, Inq., vol. 70, exp. 17, fs. 293–312.

asked one of the women if it was a sin for a woman to be *amancebada* with a priest. When Francisco de Estrada, said yes, it was a sin, Francisca replied jokingly that it was not a sin, a claim she repeated several times. Francisca apparently had very little idea of what constituted sin, especially sexual ones. When asked by the tribunal if she knew that being *amancebada* with a priest was a sin, she admitted that she did not know. Questioning quickly uncovered the depth of her ignorance. When asked what it meant to fornicate (*fornicar*) she replied that it meant that one should not commit mortal sins which she described as being, »vices, [like] gossiping«. Once it became clear that she did not know what fornicate meant the inquisitors admonished her with the following words,

She was told that God mandates in the aforementioned seventh commandment saying you shall not fornicate meaning do not have carnal commerce with a man or woman who is not your spouse. It is presumed that you have known this and understood it because you appeared of your own volition without being called in order to denounce yourself. For the reverence of God you are admonished to tell the entire truth [...].

She later admitted that she had an illegitimate daughter fathered by a priest, but noted that at the time she did not know that it was sinful to have sex with a priest. When asked to recite standard prayers, the tribunal noted that she said the Lord's Prayer poorly and did not know the *Credo* nor the other prayers. Francisca was not unique among the laity in her lack of knowledge of even the most basic prayers. In the end the tribunal found her guilty and sentenced her to one hundred lashes and a three-year exile.

Francisca's case provides an extreme example of popular ignorance of Church teachings among non-Spanish commoners. Nevertheless, some non-Spaniards had an excellent understanding of Church procedure. A good example of this can be seen in the bigamy case against, Gonzalo Hernandez, a *mulato*.²⁷ In 1584, he confessed to the Inquisition's *comisario* in Guadalajara that he had been married to a *mulata* named Francisca Rangel in the

1550s in the town of Amatitlan. After two years as husband and wife, Francisca left him. After searching for her unsuccessfully, in 1579, he sought permission to remarry an *india* named Catalina García. Unlike many others, Gonzalo informed the parish priest that he was marrying as a widower and provided witnesses to that effect. Gonzalo further noted that the priest did not marry them until he had verified the claims of Francisca's death, following the procedures mandated by the »Holy Council [of Trent]«. Four years later, Gonzalo discovered that Francisca was alive. Gonzalo tried convince her to return with him only to have her refuse. In his confession, Gonzalo asked that the Tribunal return Francisca to him so that they could continue their marriage.

Gonzalo's case is important because the tribunal found him not guilty. Gonzalo's success was two-fold. First, he denounced himself. In such cases, the tribunal tended to be more lenient. Secondly, Gonzalo understood the rules concerning marriage and had followed them. After hearing that his first wife had died, he did not refer to himself as single like Esteban de Enero and Manuel Diaz had likely done. Rather, he openly claimed the status of widower, and provided credible witnesses. Thus, the second marriage occurred legitimately, even though the witnesses erred in their knowledge of his first wife's death. These actions illustrate that despite being a non-Spaniard, Gonzalo understood the implications of his double marriage and how to rectify the situation.

Conclusion

The cases examined here do not illustrate all of the ways that marriage in New Spain changed after the Council of Trent. Nonetheless, they do highlight that publication of new marriage norms and the arrival of the Inquisition exacerbated problems of ignorance and popular misconceptions among the laity – especially non-Spaniards and common Spaniards. These individuals were far less likely to have thorough religious instruction. Changes to canon law coupled with new mechanisms of enforcement led to a period of turbulence and increased prosecution of crimes against the sacra-

27 AGN, Inq., vol. 137, exp. 6, fs. 142–186.

ment of marriage. As the above cases make clear, many of the laity did not know the rules concerning clandestine marriages much less what constituted fornication or adultery. The arrival of the Inquisition laid bare these errors and resulted in a significant number of prosecutions against bigamists and others guilty of defaming marriage.

Despite the frequent pejorative view of the tribunal today, we should not forget that within the context of the time the Inquisition functioned as an institution of pastoral oversight. The inquisitors understood their duty to be the correction of heretical errors in the hopes of ensuring the salvation of souls. While the Inquisition may appear callous or capricious, in the eyes of the Church and state, the institution served as the last line of defence against the spread of corrupting heterodoxy. Insuring orthodoxy served the pastoral needs of both individuals and society. Nevertheless, these cases suggest that during this period of rapid canonical change, pastoral mission of the Church to educate the laity could not keep up with the enforcement of orthodoxy.

Consequently, this early period of intense Inquisitorial prosecution can be seen as its own spiritual conquest, a conquest waged against longstanding misconceptions about marriage and sex and one intimately tied to the reforms promulgated by the Council of Trent. Unfortunately, gauging the success of this conquest is difficult. Over the course of a half century, bigamy cases

declined from almost a third of all prosecutions to less than a quarter of cases.²⁸ Although the decline of bigamy cases is significant, the fact that they initially represented the largest subsection of cases in the 1570s is indicative of how sacramental reform and moral reform became joined in a spiritual conquest of the laity.

Like the spiritual conquest of indigenous religiosity, this conquest of sexual and matrimonial practice among the laity would never be completely successful. Although banns and the prohibition of clandestine marriage would insure that more marriages occurred within the purview of ecclesiastical authorities, the problems of high personal mobility, marital discord, personal mistakes, fear and ignorance continued to lead individuals into bigamy.²⁹ Yet the trend in prosecutions suggests that the spiritual conquest unleashed by the reforms of Trent and the arrival of the Holy Office was moderately successful in its attempts to change existing notions of marriage and sexuality among the laity. Given the speed of this shift one cannot help but be sympathetic to individuals like Esteban de Enero who became caught up in a process of post-Tridentine Catholic reform in which ignorance caused by poor catechistic practices led them into error and prosecution by the Holy Office of the Inquisition.



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